



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
New Orleans District



For more information, contact:

Paula Keyes Kun, NASPE (703) 476-3461 [pkun@aahperd.org](mailto:pkun@aahperd.org)

Janice Meer, President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

(202) 690-5179, cell (301) 466-5654 [jmeer@osophs.dhhs.gov](mailto:jmeer@osophs.dhhs.gov)

James Addison, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, (504) 862-2201

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For release: Immediate

### **REGULAR ACTIVITY HELPS PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY Physical Activity Demonstration for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children**

Members of the media are invited to attend "Kids in Action," a physical activity demonstration to help parents and caregivers understand the importance of early physical activity for small children. The demo will be held Wednesday, March 31, at 11:15 AM, at Castle Kids Child Development Center, operated by the YMCA of Greater New Orleans for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (7400 Leake Ave., on the river between Magazine St. and Carrollton Ave.).

Participants include:

- Dr. Dorothy (Dot) Richardson, Vice Chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS)
- Dr. George Graham, President of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)
- Rae Pica, noted child movement specialist and author of *Your Active Child*, who will show parents and child care providers at the center how to help small children become active early in life.

Dr. Richardson, Dr. Graham, and Ms. Pica will be available for interviews, and there will be opportunities to photograph and videotape the physical activity demonstration.

The PCPFS, NASPE, and the Kellogg Company recently published *Kids in Action: Physical Activity for Children, Birth to Age 5*, based on NASPE's 2002 publication, *Physical Activity Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*. Copies of *Kids in Action* will be given to the parents of each child at Castle Kids and distributed to the media at the demo.

Decreased physical activity, poor nutrition, and increased sedentary activities such as watching television and playing computer and video games have contributed to

an alarming rise in childhood obesity in the US. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nine million children in America are overweight. The percentage of overweight children and teens in the nation is about 15% (about 20% for African American, Hispanic, and Native American youth). One in ten children ages two to five in the US is overweight (“Prevalence and Trends in Overweight US Children and Adolescents, 1999-2000”, JAMA, October 9, 2002, Vol. 288, No 14, reprinted). American children are developing type 2 diabetes, once considered an adult disease, and overweight children are at increased risk for developing high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. These conditions are largely preventable through daily physical activity and sound nutrition.

“Children are not small adults,” said Graham. “NASPE has developed specific guidelines on physical activity for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to give parents and caregivers planned activities they can offer children throughout the day. Confining babies and young children to strollers and play pens and to car and infant seats for hours at a time may delay development of their ability to roll over, crawl, and walk and may even delay cognitive development.”

“Restricting children’s movement teaches our youngest Americans to be sedentary and may start them on the path to obesity,” said Richardson. “Adopting a physically active lifestyle early may help decrease the likelihood that children will become obese later in life.” As PCPFS Vice Chair, Richardson represents the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the administration’s health initiative, HealthierUS, which calls on all Americans to be physically active every day.

Castle Kids, a YMCA child development center, is located on the grounds of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ New Orleans District. “We welcome NASPE and the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports to Castle Kids,” said COL Peter Rowan, New Orleans District Commander. “We are committed to offering each child in our center a healthy start in life. Regular physical activity is a habit we want to instill from the very beginning, and we are happy to provide this opportunity to showcase active lifestyles for young children.”

“The YMCA is pleased to join in this effort to promote ways our children can lead healthier lives,” said Darrell E. Johnson, President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater New Orleans. “We have been providing health and wellness programs for New Orleans’ families since 1852. This is especially timely since we will be joining YMCA’s from across the country to celebrate National YMCA Healthy Kids Day on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.”

HHS reports that obesity has doubled for US children and tripled for teens over the last two decades. Over 400,000 deaths in the US in the year 2000—17 percent of all deaths—were related to poor diet and physical inactivity, according to a new CDC study (“Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000,” JAMA, March 10, 2004).

Nearly 6,000 physical education professionals from around the country are meeting in New Orleans, March 30 – April 3, for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD). NASPE is the largest of AAHPERD's six national associations. Information about the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) can be found on the Internet at <http://www.naspeinfo.org>. NASPE is a nonprofit membership organization of over 18,000 professionals in the fitness and physical activity fields. Information about the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is available at <http://www.fitness.gov/> and <http://www.presidentschallenge.org/>. The PCPFS is an advisory committee to the President and the HHS Secretary and recommends strategies and programs to help Americans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities become physically active every day for health and enjoyment.

**-NASPE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOLLOW-**



**National Association for  
Sport & Physical Education**

An Association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

1900 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
Telephone (703) 476-3410  
Telephone (800) 213-7193  
Fax (703) 476-8316  
[naspe@aahperd.org](mailto:naspe@aahperd.org)  
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe>

## **Physical Activity Guidelines for Children, Birth to Age 5**

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends five guidelines for each age group (infants and toddlers/preschoolers). The purpose of these guidelines is to provide teachers, parents, caregivers and health care professionals with suggestions that address the kinds of physical activity, the environment and the individuals responsible for facilitating the physical activity.

### **Infants**

Part of the infant's day should be spent with a caregiver or parent who provides opportunities for planned physical activity. These experiences should incorporate a variety of baby games such as peekaboo and pat-a-cake and sessions in which the child is held, rocked and carried to new environments.

- Guideline 1. Infants should interact with parents and/or caregivers in daily physical activities that are dedicated to promoting the exploration of their environment.
- Guideline 2. Infants should be placed in safe settings that facilitate physical activity and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.
- Guideline 3. Infants' physical activity should promote the development of movement skills.
- Guideline 4. Infants should have an environment that meets or exceeds recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.

- Guideline 5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of infants should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

### **Toddlers/Preschoolers**

For toddlers, basic movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing and kicking do not occur just because a child grows older, but emerge from an interaction between hereditary potential and movement experience. These behaviors are also clearly influenced by the environment. For instance, a child who does not have access to stairs may be delayed in stair climbing and a child who is discouraged from bouncing and chasing balls may lag in hand-eye coordination.

- Guideline 1. Toddlers should accumulate at least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity; preschoolers at least 60 minutes.
- Guideline 2. Toddlers and preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours per day of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
- Guideline 3. Toddlers should develop movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks; preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.
- Guideline 4. Toddlers and preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or **exceed** recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.
- Guideline 5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of toddlers and preschoolers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

**During the preschool years, children should be encouraged to practice movement skills in a variety of activities and settings. Instruction and positive reinforcement is critical during this time in order to ensure that children develop most of these movement skills before entering school. To order the *Active Start Guidelines*, visit the NASPE bookstore online at <http://www.aahperd.org/> or call 1-800-321-0789.**